

Project Report

MEETING NEWS

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet I-471/KY 8 Interchange Justification Project team and its design consultants held a number of meetings since our last newsletter in February 2008. These meetings included a Geometric and Functionality Concurrence meeting with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and an Alternatives Cost Estimates evaluation meeting, among others.

The meetings, their purpose and outcomes are recapped below.

Geometric and Functionality Concurrence Meeting – February 19, 2008

Purpose – To review and discuss conceptual build alternatives 1, 2b, and 5d geometry and functionality with Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) planning and traffic engineers and FHWA personnel.

Outcome – The Alternate designs were approved after plan review and traffic modeling examples with one condition. The condition for the designs' final approval was a request to include Friday evening and weekend traffic counts. The counts were scheduled for June 2008 and were conducted during Friday peak hour until 10 p.m. and Saturday afternoon until 10 p.m.

I-471 Corridor Study Public Meeting Coordination – March 26th, 2008

Purpose – To work in conjunction with the I-471 Corridor Study Agencies and Consultants to form a more complete picture for both Projects. Design Team consultants displayed the three conceptual alternatives at the Corridor Study public meeting to show the progress made on I-471 at KY 8 Interchange designs.

Outcome – Design Team consultants received numerous comments on the potential effects of the Interchange conceptual designs on the I-471 Corridor, as well as the areas immediately adjacent to the Interchange. These comments are included in the Project record for consideration as alternative design revisions proceed.

Area of Potential Effects Determination Meetings – April/May 2008

Purpose – To define an Area of Potential Effects (APE) which is necessary to make sure legal protections for historic properties are applied appropriately. The KYTC Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA) works in conjunction with Project Team consultants and the Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), to delineate the APE and identify historic resources in the Project area.

Outcome – A preliminary APE is established. The Consultant's determination of eligible of structures within the APE boundary has been submitted for review and comment by DEA, FHWA and SHPO. Additional study and deliberation among the individuals and agencies responsible for assessing the impacts within the APE is continuing.

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City of Bellevue Officials and Bellevue Veterans – April 13th, 2008

With City of Bellevue Officials

Purpose – To allow City of Bellevue representatives to review the design footprints of Alternative 2d and 5b for potential right of way acquisitions necessary to accommodate the new interchange configurations.

Outcome – The meeting allowed Bellevue representatives to determine the extent that the commercial properties would be impacted regarding potential right of way acquisition, limitations of site functionality, and modified tax revenue generation.

With Bellevue Veterans

Purpose – To allow Veterans' representatives to review the impact each of the Project alternatives has for the complex. One major implication of the designs is access to the site and parking lots, which may be impacted by the redesign of KY 8 and/or Riviera Dr.

Outcome – Project Team designers provided detailed drawings of each of the Alternatives to the Veterans. The Veterans assessed the plans in order to see the implications to their facility.

Coordination Meeting with Newport on the Levee – July 25th, 2008

Purpose – To meet with Newport on the Levee personnel to gather information on Levee activities, traffic circulation and parking operations.

Outcome – Coordination continues with the Levee, other area businesses and the City of Newport to investigate solutions that will improve safety and access for users of I-471, as well as local residents and visitors to the Project-area businesses.

Alternatives' Cost Estimates Reviews – September 2008

Purpose – To review cost estimates for Alternatives 1, 2d, and 5b.

Outcome – The Alternatives' first cost estimates were recalculated as the designs were drawn to more precise detail. Ongoing cost estimate refinements are planned to accompany development of the final Alternate design recommended for construction.

Alternate Review Meeting with Federal Highway Administration and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet – November 10, 2008

Purpose – To review all three Alternatives' design plans, traffic analyses (current and forecast), environmental impacts, and costs to assess functionality and performance of each with respect to satisfying the Project Purpose and Need and to select a recommended Preferred Alternative.

Outcome – The Project Design Team, KYTC and FHWA agreed that all of the Alternatives meet Purpose and Need qualifications, safety and functionality standards. Each Alternative was also assessed with respect to the recommendation of the I-471 Corridor Study to add a fourth lane. From this, the Project Team will present the Alternatives to the Interchange Advisory Committee, the Section 106 Consulting Parties, and the Public for their recommendations for a preferred Alternative to move into final design preparations.

COMPLETION OF TRAFFIC COUNTS AND MODELING

With the Friday evening and weekend traffic counts modeled, the most comprehensive picture possible of the Interchange traffic movements was completed.

Following are the conclusions reached through traffic model examinations:

- Alternative 1 with signal optimization, lane restriping, and minor widening provides significant improvements along KY 8 and Riviera Drive. Minor queuing on the ramp occurs in 2035 traffic, however it does not reach the Daniel Carter Beard Bridge (DCCB).
- Alternative 2b – which includes all of Alt. 1 improvements to KY 8 and improvements to Riviera Dr. but closes Park Avenue ramp and splits the SB off ramp (to existing NB off ramp and to Riviera Dr.) shows smooth operations with no congestion and no back ups on the DCCB with 2035 traffic volumes.
- Alternative 5d – which includes all of Alt. 1 improvements to KY 8 and improvements to Riviera Dr. but closes Park Ave. ramp and splits the SB off ramp (to SPUI under Mainline at KY 8 and to Riviera Dr.) shows smooth operations with no congestion and no back ups on the DCCB with 2035 traffic volumes.
- All alternative traffic models included scenarios where the Newport on the Levee parking garage closes during weekend and special event peaks. Alternative 1 remains somewhat susceptible to occasional back-ups onto the DCCB, but none occur with Alternatives 2b and 5d.

The design refinements incorporated into the Alternatives have been developed to address the issues demonstrated by traffic modeling but did not result in substantial changes to the footprints of the Alternatives.

COMPLETION AND APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Baseline studies for hazardous materials, aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, air quality, traffic noise, and socioeconomic concerns have been completed. Brief findings are outlined below, but the entire report can be accessed at the Project website www.471project.org.

The baseline study for cultural and historic resources is complete and at the State Historic Preservation Office for review and comment. Once comments are received and a preferred Alternative selected, a Determination of Effects reports will be prepared for comment.

Additionally, since it was determined that the entire area contains the same probability of archaeological resources, the archaeological field survey will take place only in areas impacted by the preferred alternative.

Hazardous Materials / Underground Storage Tanks

The baseline assessment identified three sites that represent Hazardous Materials / Underground Storage Tanks issues along the three Conceptual Alternatives being considered for this project:

- The area north of Riviera Drive and Donnermeyer Drive, known locally as “the fill.”
- 37 Fairfield Drive (KY 8), currently the site of a Burger King and an AT&T retail store. The property is under deed restrictions regarding land use and a management plan to control subsurface disturbance.
- Wendling Printing Company, located at 111 Beech Street.

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Aquatic/Terrestrial Ecosystems

A summary of the aquatic and terrestrial impacts is provided below.

Impacts	No Build	Alternative 1	Alternative 2b	Alternative 5d
Stream	None	1) May have minimal impact to small, intermittent, unnamed tributary to Taylor Creek	1) Crossing of Taylor Creek 2) Relocation/crossing of small, intermittent tributary of Taylor Creek	1) Approximately 875 feet of Taylor Creek into culvert 2) Relocation/crossing of small, intermittent tributary of Taylor Creek
Indiana Bat Habitat	None	0.4 acres of poor habitat	0.8 acres of poor habitat	3.6 acres of poor habitat

It should also be noted that none of the alternates will impact wetlands, State or National champion trees, outstanding state resource waters, wild and scenic rivers or critical and natural areas.

Air Quality

The air quality analysis considered impacts at 25 representative receptors located within the project corridor. Based on the existing and projected emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), the proposed project will not result in negative air quality impacts in Campbell County, Kentucky.

The proposed project is identified as having low potential mobile source air toxics (MSAT) emissions and is deemed "Not of Concern" regarding PM_{2.5} (particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter).

With respect to the latest State Transportation Improvement Program, the proposed project is located on page 55 of the latest conforming Transportation Improvement Program, Fiscal Years 2006-2009, and approved April 14, 2005. Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana (OKI) Regional Council of Governments, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for this region, has received air conformity approval of their long-range regional transportation plan (OKI 2030 Regional Plan).

Therefore, the proposed project was determined to not be of air quality concern and is in compliance with the Kentucky State Implementation Plan for Attainment and Maintenance of National and State Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Traffic Noise

Thirteen (13) noise-sensitive receptors located within the project corridor were selected for assessment to determine potential noise impacts. The baseline describes measured and predicted noise levels for the 2008 Existing, 2035 No-Build, 2035 Build Alternative 1, 2035 Build Alternative 2b, and 2035 Build Alternative 5d scenarios.

Traffic noise impacts were predicted at 8 of the 13 receptors (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 11) for the Existing scenario, at 9 receptors for Build Alternatives 2b and 5d (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12), and at 10 receptors for the No-Build and Build Alternative 1 (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12). Modeling results indicate that these receptors exceeded the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) of 67 dBA (A-weighted decibels) for residential receivers, but did not "substantially exceed" the existing levels or "appreciably alter" future noise levels. For impacted receptors, a barrier is not reasonable since the difference between the No-Build and Build levels is less than 3 dBA for each alternative.

Socioeconomic Concerns

Four alternatives (the No-Build and three Build Alternatives) were examined to evaluate their impact on the community. The proposed project does not represent adverse impacts to aesthetic value, employment, or environmental justice. Short-term construction impacts are unavoidable, as with any construction project, but may be minimized with Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The No-Build Alternative will have no impacts to the community caused by roadway construction.

Alternative 1 proposes improvements to the existing alignments and will not relocate any ramps. As this Alternative closely follows the existing alignment, it has very little impact on the area.

Alternatives 2b and 5d propose to remove the existing southbound off-ramp and replace it with a ramp that splits, allowing vehicles to exit onto either KY 8 or Riviera Dr. Alternative 2b will acquire a portion of the Providence Park located between Providence Way and I-471. Alternative 5d will also acquire a portion of Providence Park and additionally, one residential or commercial structure (a currently unoccupied home used as a rental property on the west side of Linden Ave.). These variances will have a larger impact on the community when compared to Alternative 1.

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES, AND INTERCHANGE JUSTIFICATION STUDY

Inter-Agency Coordination

Inter-Agency coordination is necessary for compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on federally-funded projects. Continued and additional coordination will be necessary with the State Historic Preservation Office, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and other agencies and jurisdictions as deemed appropriate by the Project Team. Examples of coordinating partners include Project area Cities, the OKI Regional Council of Governments, and other non-governmental groups such as Newport on the Levee and the South Shore Development group.

Upcoming Public Involvement Activities

The next round of meetings for the Interchange Advisory Committee, Section 106 Consulting Parties, and the Public is currently being planned. The purpose of these meetings will be to receive public comment and input regarding the selection of a preferred alternative. The Project Team will present the findings of the environmental baselines studies and the results of the Project Team alternative review meeting, including traffic analyses, and cost estimates. The anticipated outcome of these public meetings will be the selection of a preferred alternative, with consideration of public input, to move forward in the project development process.

Interchange Justification Study

The Interchange Justification Study (IJS) is an FHWA-mandated report that details the Project findings and is used to justify the action and expenditure. The IJS is used to gain FHWA approval for any potential modification to an access-controlled freeway such as ramp reconstructions. The IJS examines safety and operation impacts using the traffic modeling and design plans and must show coordination with surrounding development.

Typically, the IJS is developed, approved, and then included in the environmental document. However, this project has allowed for the concurrent development of these reports. Both documents will be reviewed and must be approved by FHWA; however, the IJS focuses its attention on the engineering and operations of the facility while the environmental document focuses on project impacts related to the natural and man-made setting.

Contact Information

QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMMENTS

If you have any questions or concerns about the outlined Project impacts, please use the following information to contact us. We thank you for your input and interest; please continue to participate through the www.471project.org web-site and Project meetings. Your perspectives will help us better assess potential effects and make sure the Project meets its Purpose and Need and provides positive benefits to the communities it serves.

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